

~~SENSITIVE~~

CIA/SAVA /WVIND 710116



WEEKLY VIETNAM INDICATORS

Week Ending 16 January 1971

NSA Declassification/Release instructions on File.

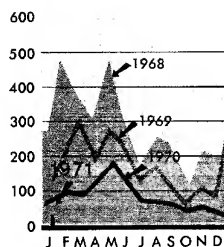
For the President Only

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SOUTH VIETNAM WEEKLY INDICATORS

1968-1970

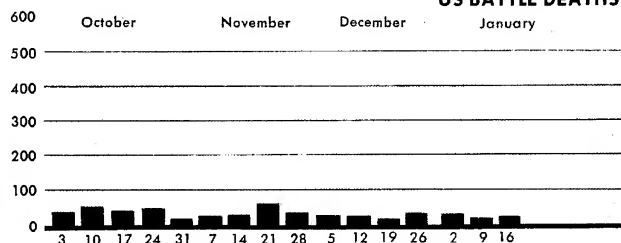
Weekly average for each month



OCTOBER 1970 - JANUARY 1971

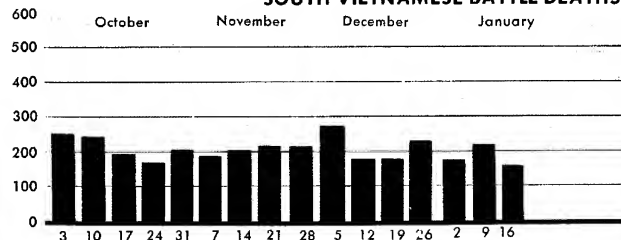
Weekly data as reported

US BATTLE DEATHS rose to 37 from the 27 of last week.



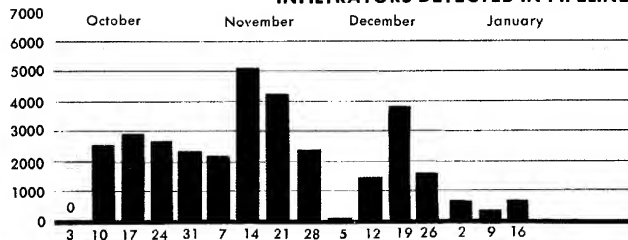
SOUTH VIETNAMESE BATTLE DEATHS

dropped sharply from last week's 237 to 163. The official total will change as late reports are received and will be lower than the figures released to the press by the GVN.



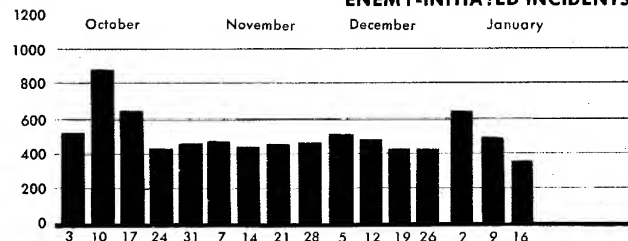
INFILTRATORS DETECTED IN PIPELINE

continue at a low level with seven groups being detected with a combined strength of 700. The total number of infiltrators since 1 October 1970 is now an estimated 34,700-37,200.



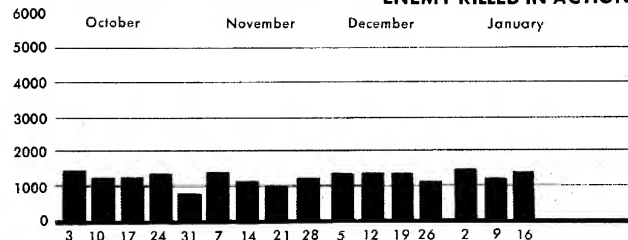
ENEMY-INITIATED INCIDENTS

decreased significantly from the 584 of last week to 352.



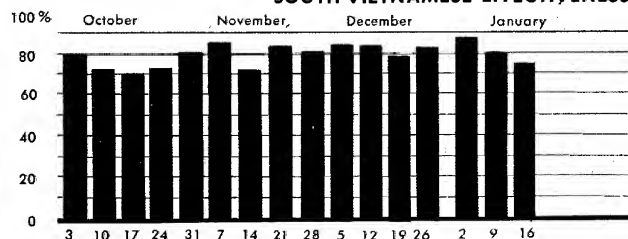
ENEMY KILLED IN ACTION

rose to 1,361 from last week's 1,177.



SOUTH VIETNAMESE EFFECTIVENESS

as measured by the percentage of enemy killed by GVN forces decreased from last week's 83% to 75%.



Statistics for the latest week shown are preliminary

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Enemy Activity

Enemy-initiated activity in South Vietnam has continued at a low level and while some slight increase may occur prior to Tet, it does not seem likely that it will be of major proportions. Three enemy regiments, the VC 271st, NVA 141st, and NVA 165th, have moved into Military Region 3 from Cambodia since 1 January. The latest arrival is the VC 271st Regiment, which was detected on 16 January about 15 miles northeast of Tay Ninh City. Enemy plans for employment of these units have not yet been determined but the moves are probably intended to relieve ARVN pressure in Cambodia and inhibit further ARVN forays across the Cambodian border.

The two-pronged joint Cambodian/South Vietnamese clearing operation to open Route 4, the vital roadlink from Phnom Penh to Kompong Som, has made relatively slow progress since its initiation on 13 January. Fighting, so far, has been sporadic with the southern task force engaging in the most intensive combat to date. Extreme caution appears to be the order of the day for the task force command. Although the northern prong of the operation apparently has reached the approaches to Pich Nil Pass, initial Cambodian Government claims that the Pass had been secured were premature. The NVA 101D and at least one battalion of the 18B Regiment are in the immediate Pass area and could prove to be a formidable obstacle to reopening Route 4. Enemy harassment of lines of communication and government positions continues throughout the rest of Cambodia. Phnom Penh and Saigon have reached an agreement on security measures for the Mekong River. The South Vietnamese will provide air support and both countries will contribute naval escorts for convoy traffic. The first convoy to operate under this new agreement successfully returned to South Vietnam from Phnom Penh on the evening of 17 January and came under one minor enemy attack.

In northern Laos, where the King has again this year directed an all-out defense of Long Tieng, Vang Pao's guerrillas began moving west from Ban Na to engage enemy forces slipping past the outer defense ring into the Sam Thong area. SIGINT continues to reinforce a Lao Government report that elements of the 312th Division have returned to Laos. Tenuous locations from direction finding place one element east and one north of the Plain of Jars. In south and central Laos, the situation remains relatively quiet.

Enemy Infiltration

Infiltration starts detected in North Vietnam remain low and no new infiltration starts have been noted since 6 January. Since 1 January, only one identified group and about 11 unidentified groups have been detected in North Vietnam, with a total estimated strength of some 1,100 personnel. During the past week, seven groups were detected in Laos, with an estimated combined strength of some 700. The total number of infiltrators since 1 October 1970 is now estimated at 34,700 - 37,200. The "crash program" of moving supplies in the Laos Panhandle continues undiminished. Three new Binh Trams (106, 107, and 108) have been detected operating in the northern part of South Vietnam, in what the Communists term MRTTH (Military Region (Quang) Tri-(Thua) Thien - Hue). Binh Tram 41, located in the southern Laos Panhandle, is apparently charged with the responsibility of funneling supplies to these new way stations.

South Vietnam Developments

The long-rumored change in National Police command took place last week when Major General Tran Thanh Phong replaced Brigadier General Tran Van Hai. This change reflects a recognition by the President and Prime Minister that the mission, prestige, and size of the National Police organization needs to be increased. The appointment of a more senior officer should help overcome resistance within the military to plans for infusion of ARVN officers into the police structure to increase police strength and improve pacification programs. General Phong, who formerly served as RVNAF J-3, as C/S of the JGS, and as Minister of Rural Development, should be able to provide the necessary clout. Meanwhile, the results of police operations against the enemy infrastructure during 1970 showed considerable improvement and increased confidence.

High-ranking South Vietnamese military officials have begun voicing sharp concern over the economic pinch being felt by members of the armed forces. Some have stated that the high rate of desertions -- some 12,000 per month -- is caused primarily by the inflationary squeeze which has kept pay scales below subsistence levels. These officers state that many officers and men work only part time in their military assignments because of the necessity of "moonlighting" to feed their families, and some troops are refusing to go on operations because of their commitments to outside jobs. According to one officer, there is a reluctance on the part of military commanders to forward reports on this subject to higher authority, or to discuss it with foreigners.

~~Top Secret~~